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Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

Annual reports of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to the Economic and Social Council

1. In its decision 99/7 of 16 April 1999, the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) took note of the reports to the Economic and Social Council (DP/1999/10 and DP/FPA/1999/5). The Executive Board also decided to transmit the reports, together with the comments made on them, to the Council for consideration at its substantive session of 1999.

2. Section I of the present document contains the report of the Administrator of UNDP; section II contains the report of the Executive Director of UNFPA.

3. The comments of the Executive Board on the reports are contained in section III below, which is an extract from the report on the second regular session of the Executive Board.

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I. REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM PROGRAMME OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE PROVISIONS OF THE TRIENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE POLICY REVIEW

A. Structures and mechanisms

1. The reform programme of the Secretary-General has provided a strong boost to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120 of 20 December 1995 on operational activities. It is thereby also facilitating the implementation of the provisions of the recent General Assembly resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998. The creation of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and its Executive Committee, has permitted accelerated implementation of numerous provisions of triennial policy legislation, which had shown steady but modest progress over previous triennial comprehensive policy reviews (TCPR).

2. With previous legislation, particularly General Assembly resolutions 47/199 of 22 December 1992 and 50/120, there had been a reliance on the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) as a coordinating and implementing mechanism for many legislative provisions, a role for which JCGP had not originally been designed.

3. As a consultative mechanism, however, JCGP has created considerable team spirit among the funds and programmes and has produced numerous concrete outputs, as required by past triennial review legislation, on programme harmonization, harmonization of policies and procedures, common premises, gender equality and personnel, among other areas. The body continues now in its original form as a consultative mechanism that meets prior to the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) to enable JCGP members to confer on positions they plan to take at ACC.

4. JCGP has an annually rotating permanent secretariat and its constant challenge has been to maintain its institutional memory and ensure continuity of action. UNDG, however, has the United Nations Development Group Office (DGO) as a permanent secretariat, as well as numerous sub-groups where, through specific memorandums outlining tasks, UNDG members are held responsible for achieving clear targets and benchmarks. UNDG and its Executive Committee are clearly accountable to the Secretary-General for the achievement of specific results within a time-frame as called for by legislation.

5. The reform programme and legislation have provided for a coherent coordination structure at headquarters and the country level, where the UNDP Administrator chairs UNDG, UNDP manages and funds the resident coordinator system and the UNDP resident representative is normally the resident coordinator. UNDP also has as one of its Executive Board-mandated goals (see decision 94/14 of 10 June 1994), "to help the United Nations family become a unified and powerful force for sustainable human development" (DP/1994/39, para.21 (b)). This unified, linked managerial structure provides for clear reporting lines, since resident coordinators report to the Administrator, as well as considerable cohesion and accountability for results.

Lessons learned and problems

6. UNDG has taken the lead on a number of initiatives to enhance the coordination of operational activities such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), common premises and the resident coordinator system. While an effort has been made to involve the country teams themselves as well as the United Nations system as a whole through such ACC machinery as the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), these are clearly two areas for further effort in 1999 and beyond. There is a growing interest among agencies of the United Nations system to be involved in some key UNDG initiatives from he outset. Similarly, during 1999, it will be important to associate the country teams in the policy development work of UNDG, possibly even delegating such work or portions of it to country teams, both to provide a reality check and to tailor the provisions to field conditions.

Recommendation

7. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the management structures now in place and functioning for the implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review legislation as a result of the reform;

(b) Encourage further use of UNDG machinery for the implementation of resolution 53/192;

(c) Call upon the member entities of UNDG to ensure that, in its future work, UNDG consults closely with resident coordinators and country teams, as well as with the member agencies of ACC, through CCPOQ, during the development of additional initiatives;

(d) Consider encouraging the governing bodies of agencies of the United Nations system to take greater and more active participation in such UNDG initiatives as the UNDAF, in which they have been invited to take part.

B. Funding

8. The landmark Executive Board decision 98/23 of 23 September 1998 paved the way for a new era in the core funding of UNDP. UNDP is currently in the process of developing the multi-year funding framework (MYFF) that integrates programme objectives, resources, budget and outcomes. The overall objective of the MYFF is to increase core resources; in doing so, it will both serve as the basis for future multi-year funding by all UNDP contributor countries and outline the results to be achieved with the announced resources.

Lessons learned and problems

9. The adoption of Executive Board decision 98/23 was the result of an extensive consultation process through 13 formal and many more informal meetings during the first three quarters of 1998. The consultation process revealed the importance of early confidence-building among the different stakeholders,

especially programme and donor countries. An important lesson learned is the need to establish early a sense of ownership on the part of all stakeholders, who need to trust the process and be confident that their interests will be fairly considered and accommodated.

10. Another finding was that for a voluntarily funded entity, a balanced funding formula needs to be developed to provide for multi-year commitments.

11. In addition, it was found that at the 1998 United Nations pledging conference only some 5 per cent of total expected pledges for UNDP for 1999 could be made. Many major donors were not in a position to pledge because of the timing of their national budget cycles. The second regular session of the Executive Board in April 1999 will provide the first opportunity for announcing UNDP core funding commitments within the context of the Executive Board.

12. The general lesson from the previous experience of UNDP with single-year pledging and funding is that it introduces a measure of uncertainty and unpredictability in annual programming levels, with a consequent negative impact on actual programmes. It is expected that the successful implementation of the multi-year funding framework will help to provide greater predictability to annual programming levels.

Recommendations

13. In view of the above and in line with General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996, the Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the progress achieved so far by UNDP in developing its multi-year funding framework (MYFF);

(b) Call upon Member States to increase core funding for all United Nations operational activities on a continued, assured and predictable basis;

(c) Take note of the outcome of the funding session linked to the MYFF during the UNDP and UNFPA Executive Board at its second regular session 1999, and of the views of Member States;

(d) Provide the General Assembly with recommendations on the future of the United Nations pledging conference, taking into account the views expressed by Member States.

C. Resident coordinator system

14. In its resolution 53/192, the General Assembly noted "the improvements in the functioning of the resident coordinator system and encourage[d] further progress, in close consultation with national Governments" (part I.D., para. 24). During 1998, with sizeable support from UNDP, considerable progress was made in the resident coordinator system in the areas of:

(a) A widened pool for selection of resident coordinators: 21 out of 131 resident coordinators are currently from United Nations entities other than

UNDP whereas in 1993 only 1 was from outside UNDP. The number of female resident coordinators has also increased from 10 per cent in 1993 to 21 per cent in 1998;

(b) Competency assessment of resident coordinator candidates: in November 1998, the first 40 resident coordinator candidates were subject to a competency assessment, a tool for examining the suitability of candidates for the position of resident coordinator; the costs of developing the assessment were covered primarily by UNDP;

(c) A faster and simpler process for the nomination, selection and clearance of resident coordinators: UNDG and subsequently CCPOQ adopted the following principles for an enhanced selection process for resident coordinators: (i) greater transparency, consultation and ownership in the selection process; (ii) greater speed in the selection and clearance processes, including ad hoc selections outside the annual cycle; (iii) the nomination by each agency of the best and brightest candidates; and (iv) the identification of the best possible candidate for each resident coordinator post. Based on these principles, with the support of UNDP, the new Inter-agency Advisory Panel met in December 1998 to review candidates to present to the Administrator;

(d) Separate performance appraisal of resident coordinators: the first resident coordinator appraisal process was completed in 1998, in which all members of ACC were invited to participate. Within UNDG, UNDP played a lead role in developing this appraisal tool. In addition, resident coordinators were asked to report regularly on cooperation of United Nations country team members, consistent with the philosophy that all country team members must "wear two hats", that of the agency that they represent and that of the United Nations system as a whole;

(e) Reporting and accountability guidelines for resident coordinators: after consultation with members of UNDG, the Administrator has provided written guidance to all resident coordinators on the reporting lines and accountability for their function as resident coordinators. New measures are under consideration to ensure that resident coordinators are strong programme advocates for all United Nations organizations;

(f) A separate and distinct job description for resident coordinators: an up-to-date, comprehensive job description for resident coordinators was developed and endorsed by CCPOQ in September 1998;

(g) Revised annual reporting procedures for resident coordinators: the guidelines for the annual reports have been revised in consultation with CCPOQ to provide a clearer basis for assessing the work of resident coordinators and United Nations country teamwork, including the preparation of an annual work plan.

Lessons learned and problems

15. The main feedback tool on the resident coordinator system has proven to be the annual report of the resident coordinator. It is the one instrument that records the entire progress of the resident coordinator system at the country level as compared with the established objectives for the year. Taken together, the reports of all the resident coordinators provide an invaluable overview of the system as a whole worldwide. Covering the period 1997, compliance with the reporting requirement was nearly 100 per cent in 1998. The new procedures for the report have resulted in work plans for 1998 having been developed for some 129 out of 131 countries.

16. In their reports, some resident coordinators have reported that some country team members have difficulty in "wearing two hats", namely that of a country team member and that of representative of their organization. Accordingly, while team members may be personally committed to cooperation, the task of coordination is made difficult because of separate agency mandates, preoccupation with agency-based programming and project/programme implementation, different programming and operational procedures and time constraints. The lack of reference to a work plan for 1997 caused in some cases the self-assessment of the country team to be somewhat uncritical and superficial, without references to difficulties and problems.

17. Many reports, however, provided good self-assessments, with well-structured, well-analysed and impact-oriented accounts of the work accomplished by the country team. A review of the reports received also revealed the importance of continuity in resident coordinator leadership and of the presence of a competent leader for the success of the work of the resident coordinator system in a given country. Countries where the resident coordinator had been reassigned and interim resident coordinator arrangements were in place did not exhibit the same level of achievement as those where an effective resident coordinator was in place. This would point to the importance of better planning in reassigning resident coordinators to avoid long gaps in filling posts. To avoid future problems, when a resident coordinator ad interim should be designated immediately when a resident coordinator is reassigned. The departing resident coordinator should prepare a handover note specifically on resident coordinator matters, in addition to the traditional handover note on UNDP resident representative matters. The note should cover the status of operations of the resident coordinator system, so that the resident coordinator ad interim or the new resident coordinator can rapidly assume the resident coordinator function, including preparing the annual report. The Administrator wrote to all resident coordinators on the subject on 4 December 1998, detailing arrangements for acting resident coordinators.

18. From the review of the resident coordinators' annual reports, it appears that timely, country-specific, meaningful feedback should continue to be provided by DGO, taking into account the views of the United Nations system entities participating in the resident coordinator system in the particular country in question.

Recommendations

19. The Council may wish to take note of the progress achieved in 1998 under the resident coordinator system and provide further guidance along the following lines:

(a) Call upon all entities participating in each resident coordinator's country team to instruct their representatives to give priority consideration to system-wide and coordination concerns, in addition to their individual agency concerns, where common initiatives are being considered, just as is required of the resident coordinator;

(b) Call for rapid progress to improve the self-assessment process of the country team as a whole as measured against the work plans established;

(c) Call upon entities of the country team to provide additional support to the resident coordinator system, in line with paragraph 27 of General Assembly resolution 53/192, including, as appropriate, financial and staff support to country-level coordination activities, funding of thematic group work, and instructions to country team members on effective collaboration with the resident coordinator;

(d) Recognize the central importance of the annual report of the resident coordinator as an oversight tool for the resident coordinator system;

(e) Call upon all entities of country teams to participate actively in the preparation of the annual report of the resident coordinator, providing substantive inputs as needed, under the leadership of the resident coordinator.

D. Planning, programming and implementation and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework

20. Following the structure of General Assembly resolution 53/192, this section considers programming processes, the common country assessment (CCA) and the UNDAF, collaboration with the World Bank, as well as implementation matters such as common premises.

21. Legislative recognition of the UNDAF through General Assembly resolution 53/192 is expected to promote the effective use of this instrument to achieve greater programme focus, coherence and collaboration, in line with the reform programme of the Secretary-General.

Lessons learned and problems

22. While there has been considerable progress in developing and piloting the UNDAF as a tool for collaboration, there is still considerable headway to be made towards the goal of programme coherence. In this connection, UNDG members and the UNDG Sub-group on Programme Policies are still grappling with two problems:

(a) How to formulate a framework that is strategic and looks holistically at the potential contribution of the United Nations system to national development rather than simply amalgamating individual mandates and concerns, with the UNDAF as a canopy over these;

(b) Having formulated a framework, how to ensure that its provisions are integrated into the strategy documents as well as into the country programmes of participating United Nations entities.

23. A related lesson learned from experience with CCAs used to prepare UNDAFs is that there is a need to ensure that the CCA is more analytical, participatory (involving a broad array of development partners) and capable of increasing advocacy and policy dialogue, especially between the concerned Government and the United Nations system.

24. An unresolved issue is the extent to which United Nations entities use the CCA and UNDAF to streamline their programming and review processes and instruments. UNDP has, for example, decided to dispense with the advisory note (which becomes optional for the country office) and programme outlines. As recommended by the UNDAF Assessment Workshop held in September 1998, it is important that UNDG members as a whole make similar simplifications to lessen the burden on country offices and their government counterparts.

25. Another problem is that the different operational policies and procedures of United Nations entities and agencies pose a singular challenge to actual operational inter-agency collaboration within the context of the UNDAF. Monitoring and evaluation of the UNDAF continues to be a challenge, particularly determining the relationships between monitoring and evaluation at the level of country programmes and at the level of the UNDAF.

26. In terms of process, the widespread introduction of the CCA and UNDAF call for a review of the functions, organization and membership of thematic groups within the resident coordinator system since they are expected to play a key role in formulation and follow-up.

27. Finally, the CCA and the UNDAF also call for the development or strengthening of skills for strategic planning and policy analysis as well as increased knowledge of the global development agendas agreed on at United Nations conferences and conventions. At the same time, United Nations entities, at both the headquarters and the country levels, still need to find appropriate ways of recognizing and rewarding staff participation and contributions to inter-agency activities such as the UNDAF.

Cooperation with the World Bank

28. Regarding cooperation with the World Bank, one concrete, successful example in 1998 was the joint review for the Economic and Social Council of collaboration among UNDG, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. However, much progress remains to be achieved on the question of mutual consultation on the programming and forward planning of operational activities. The World Bank has announced a pilot effort in 10 countries where comprehensive development frameworks are to be established. It is extremely important to

ensure complementarity between these new frameworks and the UNDAF and country programmes of the United Nations funds and programmes. To that end, UNDG has initiated exploratory consultations with the World Bank.

Regional dimensions

29. With regard to the regional dimension of operational activities referred to in paragraph 41 of General Assembly resolution 53/192 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, UNDP has now reactivated the UNDP Regional Commissions Task Force and a draft strategic compact has been prepared and is under discussion to clarify further mutual roles and expectations. In this regard, it is important that a new partnership be developed between UNDP and the regional commissions, where UNDP is seen as a substantive partner in sustainable human development, as mandated in Executive Board decision 94/14 of 10 June 1994, inter alia, and not only as a funder of operational activities, the traditional role in which the commissions have tended to view UNDP.

Common premises and services

30. In 1998, the Management Group on Services and Premises, a decision-making body composed of the directors of finance and administration of the four UNDG Executive Committee member entities, supported at the working level by the UNDG Sub-group on Common Premises and Services, advanced still further the agenda of the United Nations house. In 1998, 30 offices were identified as meeting the criteria for United Nations houses and have been designated or are pending official designation as such by the Secretary-General. The UNDG principals are presently examining the budgetary implications of alternate action plans to expand the number of United Nations houses, with scenarios that, over the next three years, would establish between 10 to 25 new United Nations houses.

31. Serious work on common services is yet to begin and is essential to ensure that the United Nations houses in fact lead to overall cost-savings in the longer term. A project financed by a trust fund from a major donor country is funding the collection of systematic information for management decision-making to expand common services. The Guidelines on Administrative Management of the Resident Coordinator System, approved by CCPOQ in September 1998, are expected to help to promote common services by providing a basis for their equitable co-management by user entities, a question that had hindered their expansion in the past.

32. Some of the lessons learned in the area of common premises are as follows. The initial overall financial cost-savings of a move to a United Nations house are limited in the majority of cases reviewed although the non-quantified benefits of co-location in terms of enhanced collaboration and cooperation may be considerable. Most existing premises are insufficient in size to accommodate all UNDG Executive Committee member entities. Buildings of sufficient size to accommodate all entities are in short supply in many countries and accommodation in them, where available, may involve significant additional rent and other costs. The modality of seeking adequate rent-free premises from Governments needs to be pursued further. Land grants from Governments are not an optimal modality because the risks and costs of building by the United Nations entities are very high and detract from the ability of the organizations to pursue their

mandates. Buildings and ownership also cause a marketability problem if the entity decides to move out. Even where the establishment of common premises is not financially feasible, there may still be wide scope for common or shared services. Recent pilot experiences in Guatemala and Zimbabwe have shown that tangible benefits can be gained from such innovations.

Recommendations

33. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the challenges cited above and call upon the funds and programmes in their efforts to simplify and harmonize procedures to operate with the medium-term goal of seeking to achieve an UNDAF that is truly a United Nations system response to national priorities rather than a canopy for independent individual programmes. The individual country programmes of the funds and programmes would then be, as envisioned in action 10 (a) of the Secretary-General's reform programme (A/51/950, para. 151), mutually consistent and complementary parts of a whole;

(b) Call upon UNDG and CCPOQ to examine the possibilities for the use of the UNDAF as a frame of reference, in accordance with national priorities and the Government's overall coordinating role, for the coordination of operational activities of other donors outside the United Nations system at the country level;

(c) Call upon United Nations entities to examine ways to further simplify their programming procedures and instruments concomitantly with the introduction of the UNDAF;

(d) Take note of and encourage the efforts of UNDG to seek ways of collaborating with the World Bank on the UNDAF process and the Comprehensive Development Framework, recognizing the Bank's distinct governance structures and mandate;

(e) Take note of progress in collaboration between UNDP and the regional commissions and highlight the need for the commissions to rely upon UNDP as a substantive partner in sustainable human development activities at the regional level;

(f) Take note of the new approach to common premises and services, both at the UNDG and the CCPOQ levels, and encourage further progress, emphasizing the principles of shared governance, transparency, quality assurance and clear cost benefits.

E. Gender balance

34. In June 1998, UNDP adopted the Policy on Gender Balance in Management (Phase II): 1998-2001, within the framework of the UNDP reform programme UNDP 2001. During the period 1998-2001, the goal of UNDP is to reach a minimum ratio of 4:6 (women:men) for all locally recruited and internationally recruited staff. By the end of the year 2001, the ratio of senior management positions at

headquarters is also expected to be a minimum of 4:6 (women:men). Furthermore, by the year 2001, a minimum of 38 per cent of resident representative positions and 40 per cent of deputy resident representatives positions are to be occupied by women.

Lessons learned and problems

35. From the evaluation of the impact of the Policy on Gender Balance in Management (1995-1997), UNDP learned that the commitment of senior management was essential for breaking the glass ceiling for professional women in top management positions. It was the implementation of this policy that created the conditions that enabled UNDP to increase the number of women assigned to senior management positions.

36. From 1994 to the end of 1997, the gender profile of the UNDP Executive Committee changed considerably, with a threefold increase from 1 to 3 in the number of female members. Since 1994, the number of women at the D-2 level almost doubled, from 8 to 15, as did the number of female resident representatives, which rose from 14 to 26.

37. This major achievement in the advancement of women in management was due largely to specific, targeted action at the highest levels to promote and recruit women to senior positions. Despite this achievement and considerable effort, UNDP did not reach the target set in the Policy on Gender Balance in Management (1995-1997) for an overall gender ratio of 38:62 (women:men) among its internationally recruited workforce; in fact, there was a decline in the overall ratio of women to men. UNDP also did not achieve the targets for the D-1 level, resident representatives and deputy resident representatives. The shortfall was due in part to the recent downsizing exercise, when many women at the P-3 through P-5 level left the organization. These departures disproportionately affected women, particularly those in mid-career.

Recommendation

38. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the lessons learned by UNDP in the implementation of its gender balance policy;

(b) Call for further efforts to retain women at mid-career and encourage implementation of Phase II of the policy;

(c) Offer further guidance on achieving gender balance, in light of its review of similar policies of other United Nations entities.

F. Gender mainstreaming and poverty eradication

39. In its decision 94/14, the Executive Board mandated both poverty eradication and the advancement of women as mainstream focus areas for UNDP. The advancement of women is an integral part of UNDP work in poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods for the poor, to which 39 per cent of UNDP core

resources are currently devoted. A key dimension of the UNDP approach to poverty eradication is the empowerment of the poor, especially poor women. UNDP thereby addresses both income poverty as well as issues of gender equality.

Lessons learned and problems

40. UNDP experience and the research it has commissioned show that in addressing the feminization of poverty it is important to go beyond an income-generation approach, for example, through micro-credit schemes for female heads of household, to address more fundamental issues such as improving people's capabilities - literacy, health and nutritional levels - as well as their entitlements to assets and resources. Many studies, such as the Human Development Report 1997, for example, indicate that the low status of women also makes their households poorer; there is an empirical link at the aggregate level between gender inequality and overall human poverty. Gender inequality leads to the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next as malnourished mothers give birth to low-birth-weight children and poorly educated mothers are less able to foster the education of their children. An illustrative case of the UNDP approach to mainstreaming gender concerns is the South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme, which has both increased women's incomes and empowered them socially and economically.

41. In coming years, UNDP, with its United Nations and other partners, needs to address two unresolved problems in gender mainstreaming and poverty eradication:

(a) The macro dimensions of human poverty, including the need to strengthen gender-aware macro-economic planning and policy-making, which will call for improved statistics, especially in the critical areas of the use of time as well as national accounting and unremunerated labour;

(b) Participation and empowerment, stressing community efforts to address their own poverty, especially the poverty of women, by tackling their deprivation in basic capabilities and entitlements, but also by linking these efforts, as appropriate, with initiatives at the meso and macro levels.

Recommendations

42. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the lessons learned by UNDP in the area of gender mainstreaming and poverty eradication and welcome the two-pronged approach to addressing gender inequality and poverty eradication followed by UNDP through (i) income-generation and (ii) promoting entitlements and capabilities;

(b) Call upon United Nations entities and invite agencies of the system to collaborate with UNDP in further developing and implementing such a two-pronged strategy, particularly through CCAs, UNDAFs and country programmes at the country level, as well as through studies and projects at the regional and global levels.

G. National execution

43. During 1998, UNDP conducted further policy and procedures work in national execution on two levels: (a) at the level of UNDP itself, where revised procedures for national execution were issued effective 1 April 1998 and (b) at the level of CCPOQ, where UNDP served as task manager in developing common guidelines for national execution for the United Nations system. While it is still too early to measure the impact of the revised procedures of UNDP, the thrust of the new procedures was to follow up on Executive Board decision 98/2 of 23 January 1998 on the policy implications of non-core funding, including country office support to national execution and to incorporate the findings of the national execution evaluation.

Lessons learned and problems

44. During 1998, UNDP led the CCPOQ effort to develop common guidelines on national execution for the United Nations system and the resulting chapter on national execution of the CCPOQ operational activities manual was formally adopted by CCPOQ at its 13th session in September. Two unresolved issues within the United Nations system, where agency practices vary considerably, had made reaching consensus particularly difficult: (a) approaches to the channelling of funds in national execution and (b) the extent to which agencies and entities are involved in implementation under national execution.

45. The present consensus leaves ample margin in both areas for agencies to operate according to their own legislation and rules and regulations. While there are still some agencies that prefer channelling resources through their own systems as well as executing programmes in order to avoid some of the problems associated with national execution, many more agencies are increasingly willing to transfer execution to national authorities when capacity clearly exists. The CCPOQ guidelines represent the common denominator feasible in terms of harmonization at the present time. However, additional guidance from governing bodies would further harmonization efforts by reaffirming the spirit of national execution and encouraging agencies to strive to involve national project managements progressively, both in direct management of funds through advances by the funding entities as well as in the actual implementation of national execution.

Recommendations

46. Based on the above lessons learned, the Council may wish to:

(a) Welcome the adoption of common national execution guidelines by CCPOQ;

(b) Call upon the United Nations member entities of CCPOQ and invite the member agencies of CCPOQ to review their existing policies, procedures, rules and regulations to permit greater involvement, where national capacity exists or as it develops, of national project managements in both the management of project funds as well as programme implementation.

H. Monitoring and evaluation

47. Paragraphs 52 to 57 of General Assembly resolution 53/192 provide a clear legislative basis for future work in the area of monitoring and evaluation.

Lessons learned and problems

48. During 1998, the focus of UNDP was on results-based management and on developing the tools to put the concept into practice and to link it to the new multi-year funding framework. Experience shows that for results-based management to be effective, it is important to make results part of the managerial culture of the organization. Results and corresponding indicators need to be introduced into the compacts of individual units, country offices and bureaux. Accordingly, the capacity of the Evaluation Office has been focused in 1998 on supporting managers of programmes and operations to develop credible indicators for results. UNDP needs to shift its focus from outputs, which tend to be specific, concrete and limited to outcomes that are broader and more closely linked to national development objectives themselves. Increasingly, with the programme approach and upstream policy work, it makes more sense for UNDP to focus on outcomes that result from the contributions of many stakeholders under the leadership of the Government rather on the outputs that resulted from a traditional project. There is a closer link between outcomes and long-term impact. In 1998, UNDP also focused on the linkage between evaluation on the one hand and knowledge and learning on the other, feeding back the results of evaluations to operational units in the form of publications, bulletins and participation by Evaluation Office staff in the Programme Management Oversight Committee and in resident representative cluster meetings.

49. Another lesson learned is that monitoring and evaluation need to be more closely linked than in the past. In the past, monitoring has focused on reviewing the compliance with work plans and listed outputs. Monitoring needs to become more of a self-evaluation by programme management, introducing elements of evaluation even during the programme's life. These interim self-evaluation conclusions are often far more valuable than the ex post information of evaluations because the interim conclusions can be used to reorient or redirect programme operations.

50. In addition, under the programme approach, which is increasingly used, both monitoring and evaluation need to take account of the contributions of other stakeholders, including donors. The single-donor focus of traditional monitoring and evaluation needs to be overcome since the decentralized and multi-actor nature of the programme approach makes it very difficult to single out the actual effect of any single donor contribution. It is more meaningful to look at the shared outcomes.

51. Regarding joint evaluations, UNDP experience to date shows that they are time-consuming to organize and that the main challenge is not technical but managerial and organizational, involving consultations with a number of agencies and their counterpart ministries, which, in turn, need to consult with others in their Government. There is already a common understanding on basic concepts of evaluation and it is not necessary to develop any additional specific methodology for joint evaluations as such a methodology would introduce an

unnecessary rigidity. The approach to joint evaluations needs to be practical and flexible, adapted to local circumstances.

52. In 1998, UNDP continued as Chair of the Inter-agency Working Group on Evaluation, which is addressing the five problems of: (a) results-based management; (b) knowledge and learning; (c) harmonization of evaluation procedures; (d) evaluation and the programme approach; and (e) reinforcing national evaluation capacities.

53. As a permanent observer of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), UNDP, jointly with the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), assisted the OECD/DAC Secretariat in organizing in New York in October 1998 a workshop on results-based management. The lessons learned from that working party meeting were: (a) systems of results-based management need to be kept as simple as possible as they tend to become very complex; (b) results should not be tied mechanistically to resources - unachieved results are not, for example, necessarily grounds for cutting resources for an activity; (c) the objectives of results-based management should be clarified to serve either as a management tool or a means of accountability or a source of information; (d) outcomes are more relevant than outputs to ensure aid credibility; (e) rather than adopting standard formulas, results-based management should be adapted to individual organizational cultures; and (f) implementing results-based management takes time and involves learning by the whole organization.

Recommendations

54. Based on the lessons learned and the problems raised, the Council may wish to provide guidance on the following points:

(a) Promoting joint evaluation in the United Nations to assess impact and capacity-building;

(b) Calling upon United Nations entities to promote capacity-building for evaluation in their programme activities in the area of public sector management;

(c) Calling for a pragmatic approach to joint evaluations since the problems are managerial and organizational rather than technical.

II. INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO MAJOR UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS

55. As called for in Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/44 of 31 July 1998, UNDP has stressed in its work during 1998 the importance of integrated and coordinated follow-up to United Nations conferences both in its programme work as well as through its role as funder and manager of the resident coordinator system. For example, in its resolution 1998/44 the Council "reiterates that poverty eradication and improving the living conditions of people everywhere are key development objectives of the Council's efforts to ensure integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences" (part I, para.1).

Through its programme and its support to the resident coordinator system, UNDP has sought to promote poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods as an overarching goal. The UNDP Poverty Report 1998: Overcoming Human Poverty details some of that work and findings emerging from it. UNDP also led the effort in CCPOQ to produce the second guidance note to the resident coordinator system on conference follow-up, which firmly places the resident coordinator system at the centre of future United Nations system efforts in this area and proposes some successor arrangements to the inter-agency task forces, which have completed their assignments.

56. In its statement to the Economic and Social Council's session on the follow-up to conferences, which was held on 13-15 May 1998, UNDP tabled several problems that continue to beset the integrated and coordinated (i.e., horizontal) follow-up to conferences: (a) the relative lack of political support for the horizontal follow-up to conferences as opposed to the conference-by-conference (vertical) follow-up, for which individual agencies have clear legislative mandates and reporting obligations; (b) the lack of indicators to permit effective integrated and coordinated follow-up while sectoral indicators for individual conferences are more abundant; and (c) the lack of realization of the funding expectations generated by the conferences to the extent provided for in the programmes of action. These three challenges should be an important focus of Council deliberations and recommendations.

Lessons learned

57. The analysis of the resident coordinator reports covering 1997 and resident coordinator replies to the TCPR questionnaire revealed that the establishment and operation of thematic groups had positively influenced the coordination of operational activities relating specifically to the integrated and coordinated follow-up to United Nations conferences. Thematic groups devoted to such subjects as poverty eradication and gender equality permitted the specific consideration of cross-cutting themes that individual agencies might not always address as they undertake their mandated monitoring related to individual conferences.

58. An important element contributing to the success of thematic groups was the participation of stakeholders from the Government, civil society and the private sector, who provided an essential reality check to the deliberations with regard to the national context. Such participation should be strongly encouraged. Some resident coordinators signed memorandums of understanding with these participants to ensure mutual understanding of the roles and nature of participation. The most successful thematic groups were those led by agencies with a clear specialized capacity or a comparative advantage in the subject area.

Recommendation

59. The Council may wish to take note of the points raised above and provide guidance along the following lines:

(a) Call upon the governing bodies of United Nations entities to consider devoting specific resources to horizontal follow-up in addition to the already

mandated vertical follow-up, addressing the need to balance the clearly legislated mandate for vertical follow-up of individual conferences on the one hand with the Council's requirement for integrated and coordinated or horizontal follow-up on the other hand;

(b) Re-emphasize strongly the central importance of thematic or theme groups within the resident coordinator system as a tool for horizontal follow-up so that these groups are organized around truly cross-cutting themes such as poverty eradication rather than around the themes of individual conferences alone;

(c) Reiterate the importance of making conference follow-up a major pillar of each UNDAF prepared;

(d) Call for the annual report of the resident coordinator to serve increasingly as a major feedback and oversight tool for monitoring progress on United Nations operational activities relating to horizontal conference follow-up, in line with the CCPOQ guidelines on conference follow-up as well as the revised instructions on the annual report;

(e) Call for the implementation at the country level, through thematic groups and concrete operational activities, of Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/44 regarding "poverty eradication and ... improving living conditions..." (part I, para. 1).

III. FOLLOW-UP TO SPECIAL ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE: AGREED CONCLUSIONS

60. The agreed conclusions of the humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session 1998 as well as General Assembly resolution 53/192 (part II C, paras. 38-40) provide a strong legislative basis for the interaction of operational activities and humanitarian assistance.

Lessons learned and problems

61. The primary concern of UNDP and other UNDG members in this area has been ensuring the compatibility and complementarity of operational activities and humanitarian assistance, particularly in countries in special circumstances. General Assembly resolution 53/192 refers to the need to develop a comprehensive approach to countries in crisis, through a strategic framework, as appropriate. Present inter-agency consultations, guidelines and practices also indicate clearly the need for a comprehensive approach to countries in crisis where, depending on the specific circumstances, the portfolio of available managerial instruments include the strategic framework, the consolidated appeal process and the UNDAF. The appropriate instruments need to be selected in a flexible and properly timed manner in order to respond to often rapidly changing and sometimes regressive circumstances.

62. Current guidelines indicate clearly that the strategic framework is an instrument to be used in exceptional circumstances, where the United Nations has an acknowledged political mandate and where certain unusual crisis conditions

exist. So far there has been only one country where a strategic framework has been formulated and a possible second country is under consideration for a strategic framework.

63. Similarly, the consolidated appeals process, as described in the agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1998, is a time-bound initiative geared to helping a country to mobilize resources for humanitarian needs at a time of emergency, with a programming dimension primarily for recovery.

64. The following represent findings based on country experiences:

(a) Earlier-held concepts and approaches to the relief and development continuum are no longer valid or adequate. It is increasingly recognized that crises rooted in political, social and economic problems do not respond to traditional formulas or to approaches that focus only on survival but not on sustainability. Development during crisis is a continuing phenomenon, from which the conclusion to be drawn is that crisis, reconstruction (recovery) and development are often three coexisting phases and must be recognized as such in a comprehensive and holistic approach to peace-building. Experience shows that the transition from one phase to another is non-linear and non-sequential. Countries can move back and forth through these phases. In such situations, a comprehensive approach needs to be adopted, which builds upon a wide partnership of assistance actors, including the United Nations system, donors, non-governmental organizations, and international financial institutions, supporting nationally led efforts to sustain livelihoods and rebuild communities;

(b) Humanitarian aid can only have a lasting effect if capacities are regenerated to foster sustainable recovery. Enabling conditions must be created for reintegration; restoring human security, constitutionality and the rule of law; civic empowerment; economic productivity; accountable governance and sustainable development;

(c) Within the United Nations system, the role of the resident/humanitarian coordinator must be strengthened through inter-agency support of country operations, harmonized programming and information-sharing;

(d) Disaster prevention and emergency preparedness must become major dimensions of development programmes, especially in disaster-prone areas for vulnerable communities. Local capacities and coping mechanisms must be regularly assessed and monitored and early warning indicators routinely analysed and reported on for preventive action at national and international levels;

(e) Better operational definitions of countries in special development situations should be elaborated;

(f) National capacity-building for preventive development should encompass minority rights, mediation and arbitration organs, dispute-resolution machinery, judicial and constitutional reform together with all other elements of participatory and sustainable governance.

65. However, the long-term recovery and development instrument should be the UNDAF and its underlying country programmes.

66. The 3 November 1998 joint meeting of the UNDG Executive Committee, the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the Executive Committee on Peace and Security provided a useful forum for the discussion of linkages between humanitarian assistance in emergencies, assistance for recovery and operational activities for development. The phase of recovery was much stressed at the meeting and requires further attention in the future. For the first time, the meeting brought together members of three Executive Committees. It also brought together the political, programmatic, budgetary and managerial aspects of humanitarian assistance and underscored the interconnectedness of the emergency, recovery and development phases. The meeting underlined the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach to country-based action. While the meeting discussed linkages between the consolidated appeal process and the UNDAF, it proposed going beyond consideration of individual programming instruments to develop a versatile tool kit of instruments capable of addressing all phases of coordinated country programming, including: (a) the possibility of simultaneous action in response to both emergency and development; (b) the filling of gaps in the repertoire of tools; and (c) the reinforcement of the present tools, especially the CCA.

67. More consultations are also required on the proposed programming dimension of the consolidated appeal process as well as the use of the UNDAF in post-emergency recovery situations. These clarifications will be an important focus of the discussions between UNDG and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs during 1999. The flexibility of the UNDAF as well as its inherent, long-term character advocate strongly in favour of its use in post-conflict recovery situations. If properly designed, the UNDAF can assure the long-term transition from recovery to development as well as address the more immediate problem of coexistence of emergency, recovery and normal development operations in many countries.

Recommendations

68. While, as outlined above, an important legislative basis for the linkages and interaction between operational activities and humanitarian assistance has been established, the Council may wish to detail that legislative basis further by providing guidance along the following lines:

(a) Recognize that the strategic framework is designed for use only in exceptional circumstances;

(b) Recognize that the UNDAF and its underlying country programmes is a long-term development tool that can, if adequately prepared to include contingency planning, provide for post-crisis recovery as well as the transition to normal operational activities;

(c) Call upon UNDG, in revising the guidelines of the UNDAF, to include specific instructions for its use for post-crisis recovery and the transition to normal development;

(d) Call upon the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs in reviewing its guidelines for the consolidated appeals process, to ensure that the programming dimension for recovery is fully compatible with the UNDAF where it exists, and where it does not exist, paves the way, as appropriate, for an UNDAF, which would provide for long-term operational activities;

(e) Recognize, in consequence, that post-crisis recovery is a transition phase where both the programming dimension of the consolidated appeal process and the UNDAF can serve as useful and complementary tools, provided they are designed in consultation with the involved parties and entities;

(f) Call upon the Secretariat, in further developing these tools, to involve country teams fully in crisis countries so as to provide a reality check and sharing of experiences.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

69. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. Take note of the document "Reports to the Economic and Social Council: Report of the Administrator" (DP/1999/10);

2. Decide to transmit it to the Economic and Social Council, together with the comments and guidance provided by delegations at the present session.

II. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

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Introduction

1. This report takes into account Executive Board decision 98/5 on the guidelines for presentation of reports to the Economic and Social Council and is in conformity with the joint format agreed to with UNDP and UNICEF. The consolidated list of issues central to improved coordination of operational activities has been prepared in consultation with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) as called for in paragraph 3 of the same decision.

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM PROGRAMME OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE PROVISIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE TRIENNIAL POLICY REVIEW

A. Structure and mechanisms

2. UNFPA participates fully in the efforts of the UNDG and its Executive Committee to help implement United Nations reforms at the country, regional and global levels. The Fund's constructive commitment to the reform process is in parallel with its resolve to ensure that the concerns of UNFPA's country-driven programme priorities are adequately addressed. UNFPA is committed to examining what works and why, and to addressing those issues that need improvement. The Fund therefore accords high priority to systematically documenting and sharing information on lessons learned and best practices related to coordination. UNFPA believes that coordination should be pursued as a means to more effective programmes and better and more timely delivery of those programmes. Coordination, therefore, must be judged by the concrete results it produces at the country level. There is need to ensure that the processes are not too demanding in terms of staff time and that both the process and product created are subscribed to by the entire country team and by national counterparts.

PROGRAMME-RELATED ISSUES

B. Country Strategy Note (CSN), Common Country Assessment (CCA), the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and collaborative programming

3. A major part of the UNDG work has focused on the pilot phase of the UNDAF, which was reviewed and assessed by the General Assembly during its consideration of the triennial policy review (TPR) at its fifty-third session. The balanced and productive resolution from the General Assembly (53/192) reflects the careful and collaborative preparation of the report of the Secretary-General, which included inputs from the UNDG. Significant issues contained in the resolution include the emphasis on national ownership; follow-up to the United Nations conferences of the 1990s; a comprehensive definition of operational activities; reference to the right to development, enabling environment, the role of the civil society and NGOs; and a strong emphasis on funding for operational activities. UNFPA will participate fully in the efforts of the UNDG and United Nations Department

of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in the elaboration of the Management Plan for the implementation of resolution 53/192.

4. UNFPA has supported, and participated, in the efforts of the UNDG to implement the UNDAF Action Plan, producing, among other things, the CCA and UNDAF guidelines, both of which are very much a work in progress. Specific issues still need to be clarified and the work needs to be spaced out in a manner designed to ensure that procedures are not rushed into place. The Fund has consistently stressed that developing guidelines for the CCA and UNDAF and establishing a corresponding global support system are vitally important activities that need a strong country focus and the complete involvement of national authorities if they are to be seen as legitimate and are to be operationally successful. The Fund has therefore suggested that field offices should be provided with additional guidance on key issues such as involvement of specialized agencies; support to field offices for the UNDAF process; and the need to clarify the timetable and plan on how the CCAs and UNDAFs will be taking place.

5. It is necessary to find ways to reduce the additional workloads created by these new processes and instruments, both on the programme countries and on UNFPA field staff, and to simplify existing programme requirements. In short, the aim should be to reduce the workloads of both national counterparts and field offices as well as the Fund's small headquarters staff, which must meet ever-increasing requirements for meetings and reporting. To achieve this aim the new instruments must be strong strategic planning tools and not simply an agglomeration of existing programmes and projects. Also, the value added of the new instruments can be enhanced when they are applied at the start of a programme within the context of a fully harmonized programme cycle.

6. The UNDAF pilot phase has highlighted the value of synergy and complementarity. Collaborative programming and reviews in the past have not been fully documented, and consultations, peer reviews and other collaborative activities often took place on an informal basis. Some sporadic references are found in the annual reports of Resident Coordinators and the reports of individual agency representatives, but there is no systematic record of such collaboration. The UNDAF places such collaboration in the forefront, and it should help to make the planning and implementation of joint exercises more transparent and visible. UNFPA strongly supports this opening up of opportunities for sustained programme collaboration.

7. The Fund has made a concrete effort to simplify programming processes and instruments and has produced new programme guidelines that ensure that such processes do not duplicate those being put in place under the Secretary-General's reform initiative. Indeed, they foresee the use of CCAs and UNDAFs as the starting point for the programming. UNFPA's ongoing and new country programmes have all taken into account General Assembly resolutions on harmonization and coordination.

8. Certain aspects of the UNDAF will require continued monitoring: How can UNDAF bring about more effective and timely programme delivery? How will the role of Governments firm up and evolve at both the inception and assessment stages of the programme? How will the process relate in practical terms to CSNs? UNFPA sees a need to efficaciously examine how the extra workloads created by the CCAs, CSNs and UNDAFs, both on the field and headquarters staff as well as national counterparts, can be reduced. Programming procedures and instruments in all agencies will have to be correspondingly simplified to ease the process. UNFPA attaches great importance to making these processes as inclusive as possible, extending to all partners, including civil society and NGOs. It also emphasizes the need for seeking how the processes can carry forward the coordinated follow-up to United Nations conferences, especially in the use of the products produced by the task forces of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) established by the Secretary-General to promote implementation of the programmes of action of those conferences. UNFPA considers system-wide support to country teams to develop data systems and indicators to help establish baseline data and monitoring of conference goals as vital in the entire process.

C. National execution

9. Since most of the developments within UNFPA in the area of national execution were elaborated on in the report of the Fund to the ECOSOC in 1998 for the purpose of the TPR, the major developments are only recapitulated below for easy reference and update. These are as follows:

(a) UNFPA has prepared guidelines on criteria for assessing potential executing agencies, based on an assessment of the Fund's experience with different execution modalities. These criteria are applicable to international and regional institutions as well as to national institutions, both governmental and non-governmental.

(b) The Fund's new programming guidelines include an assessment of national capacity for programme development and implementation during the Country Population Assessment (CPA) stage and provides for further discussion of institutional arrangements, including execution modalities, during the formulation and approval of country programmes.

(c) The UNFPA Technical Support System (TSS) is designed to build and promote national capacities, through utilizing national experts as well as by providing technical support to further develop national capabilities.

(d) An independent study, which UNFPA presented to the Executive Board at the annual session 1998, identified ways to increase absorptive capacity and financial resource utilization in population programme activities.

(e) The UNDG sub-group on programme operations has been reviewing this independent study on the recommendation of the UNFPA Executive Director, focusing in particular on the issues of national capacity and national execution.

D. Monitoring and evaluation

10. The UNDAF provides a critical opportunity for the organizations of the United Nations system to advance collaboration on monitoring and evaluation. It not only provides the context for monitoring the performance of the United Nations system in specific countries but also enables more coherent monitoring of the follow-up to United Nations conferences. The assessment of the UNDAF pilot phase is an important example of interagency collaboration in monitoring and evaluation. UNFPA staff contributed to all facets of the assessment as well as to the drafting of the report on the assessment.

11. UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA contributed to the revision of the UNDAF guidelines pertaining to monitoring and evaluation. There was agreement that requirements and mechanisms be kept simple and practical and that the national Governments and country teams not be overburdened. The guidelines are being circulated to members of the Interagency Working Group on Evaluation for review before they are put into final form.

12. UNFPA participates actively in the work of the Interagency Working Group on Evaluation, which is the only interagency technical body in the United Nations system that provides a forum for technical exchange on substantive as well as methodological work in evaluation. Some 30 entities in the United Nations system, including the United Nations, its funds and programmes, specialized agencies, regional banks and commissions, and the World Bank, attend its annual meetings, for which UNDP serves as secretariat. At its last annual meeting, some of the topics on the agenda were: capacity development in monitoring and evaluation; results-based management; knowledge and learning; and harmonization of monitoring and evaluation. UNFPA made a presentation on the evaluation of modalities for executing UNFPA-supported programmes and the study on absorptive capacity.

13. The Fund has also participated in all the interagency efforts on harmonization and has collaborated closely with UNICEF, which is the lead agency for revising the monitoring and evaluation sections of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) Operational Activities Reference Manual, using as a basis the 1996 common guidelines for monitoring and evaluation of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP). Completion of this work is awaiting the outcome of the revision of the UNDAF guidelines and the consensus on monitoring and evaluation provisions.

14. There have been other instances of UNFPA's collaboration with United Nations partners in the area of monitoring and evaluation. For example, UNICEF and UNFPA participated in a workshop on Performance Management and Evaluation in October 1998 convened by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Working Party on Aid Evaluation and organized by the Swedish International Development Agency and UNDP. All three organizations (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA) benefitted from the meeting in their ongoing efforts to assimilate results-based management approaches. In 1998, UNFPA field staff participated in two UNDP training events on results-based monitoring and evaluation in Pakistan and the Syrian Arab Republic. The training module developed for these courses was later adapted for use in two training events for UNFPA headquarters staff in November 1998. UNICEF and UNFPA are participating in the recently launched UNDP EVALNET, a network of staff from both field and headquarters who volunteered to serve as resource persons for evaluation work. Both agencies attended the orientation meeting for the first group of volunteers in December 1998. UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA have agreed to launch two joint evaluation exercises in 1999. One will be a joint country programme evaluation to examine how each organization has contributed to national capacity-building; the other will be a thematic study of collaboration with NGOs.

15. UNFPA's new programming guidelines mandate the use of the logical framework (logframe) analysis, which emphasizes the use of baseline data and indicators for monitoring the achievement of goals, purposes and outputs. The use of the logframe provides a common language for dialogue with other partners because its concepts are well known, although there may be slight variations in terminology from organization to organization. UNFPA's revised evaluation guidelines mandate compulsory country programme evaluations to assess programme performance and achievements.

16. Current UNFPA plans include promotion of learning and sharing of knowledge through the Fund's various interdivisional theme groups at headquarters and particularly through UNFPA Country Support Teams (CSTs). In light of their technical assistance role and their regular firsthand contact with field-level operations, CST advisers are particularly well placed to promote the synthesis and dissemination of lessons learned, to identify and disseminate best practices and to continually assess the impact of operational activities at the field level.

17. UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA provided inputs at various stages, both individually and jointly, to the Impact Evaluation of United Nations Operational Activities for Development mandated by General Assembly resolution 50/120, which was an integral part of the preparation for the TPR in 1998. The exercise was managed by DESA and undertaken by independent consultants. The focus of the study was the capacity building in United Nations operational activities for development from 1980 to1995. As a pilot exercise, it has provided lessons learned for future system-wide reviews and evaluations. It has also served to highlight the importance of institutional memory and of the establishment and use of performance indicators.

E. Gender balance, gender mainstreaming and poverty eradication

18. This is dealt with in some detail in the section on coordinated follow-up to conferences, in particular in the subsection on the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

RESIDENT COORDINATOR SYSTEM

F. Strengthening of the Resident Coordinator system

19. In order to strengthen the Resident Coordinator system, the UNDG is actively working, and making progress, on a number of issues. For example, initiatives are under way for widening the pool of Resident Coordinators and for simplifying the process of selection. A systematic procedure for the appraisal of the performances of Resident Coordinators has been put into operation, and the principle that all country team members must "wear two hats" is being operationalized to the extent possible.

20. Among the issues that remain on the table for discussion is the need to further differentiate between the responsibilities of the Resident Coordinator and those of the UNDP Resident Representative. It is important to ensure full participation in, and support of, the Resident Coordinator system by all members of the United Nations system, stressing that all members of the Resident Coordinator system at the country level are representatives of their own organizations as well as full members of the country team. Continued attention is also required by the UNDG to such issues as the selection, appraisal and training of Resident Coordinators.

21. Among his reform measures, the Secretary-General decided that all United Nations funds, programmes and information centres should be part of a single office located in a UN House. The Secretary-General has endorsed the definition of a UN House, and the UNDG is actively working on establishing more such UN Houses.

22. Guidelines for common services are also being developed by the UNDG. The views of UNFPA, as expressed within the UNDG and in various other fora, is that there are likely to be financial implications for some of these initiatives that will have to reviewed carefully. The Fund feels that it is most important to develop common services in a business-like manner so as to ensure the high-quality and timely delivery of services. This has to be accompanied by a management and oversight system that can guarantee transparency and accountability, which in turn can ensure that the process remains constructive and financially sound.

RESOURCES

G. Results-based multi-year funding framework for UNFPA

23. Core resources are the bedrock of funding for operational activities. The overriding concern of all the UNDG partners is to secure a more stable basis for and to increase the funding of operational activities. This is being addressed through the United Nations inter-governmental process, which is seeking an improved modality for pledging. Addressing resource mobilization issues is one of the most important aspects of United Nations reform, as well as a major concern of the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes. For UNFPA, discussions on a UNFPA funding strategy in its Executive Board have been facilitated by the fact that UNFPA is seen to have a clear and focused mandate and programme priorities and a clear and focused resource allocation system based on a country's level of achievement of ICPD goals.

24. The Executive Board, by its decision 98/24 on the UNFPA funding strategy, instructed UNFPA to develop a multi-year funding framework integrating programme objectives, resources, budget and outcomes, with the objective of increasing core resources. In view of the importance of the multi-year funding framework, UNFPA has established an inter-divisional working group within the Fund to work on the framework and to prepare the conference room paper that will be submitted to the Executive Board at its second regular session in 1999. The working group has undertaken an extensive consultative process with others in the United Nations system as well as with national development cooperation agencies to learn from their experiences in results-based approaches. The group has also convened several highly productive workshops, both in-house and with UNFPA's partners in the United Nations system, and is making sure that both headquarters and field offices are involved.

25. Putting the multi-year funding framework into operation will be complex and will require shifts in thinking by all concerned. UNFPA already has many of the elements of the framework in place. What is needed is to link these elements with a comprehensive framework of results and resources. This will be done incrementally through an evolving four-year corporate plan that specifies both baselines at the beginning of the period and benchmarks to be achieved by the end of the period. This will be followed by an assessment of the resources required to operationalize the corporate plan translated into a multi-year, annual resources commitment plan containing indications from donors and others on the likely level of resources that would be made available to UNFPA for successive years of the multi-year funding framework.

II. INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO MAJOR UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS

A. International Conference on Population and Development
B. Fourth World Conference on Women

26. As mandated by the General Assembly, the review of the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action is under way. As part of a preparatory process that will culminate in a Special Session of the General Assembly, extensive meetings and studies have been undertaken, including a series of round-table and technical meetings organized by the UNFPA during 1998; consultations organized by the United Nations regional commissions; a global field enquiry conducted by UNFPA in mid-1998 in which information was collected from 114 developing countries and countries with economies in transition through UNFPA field offices, and to which 18 donor countries also responded; progress reports from United Nations specialized agencies and other United Nations organizations; and reviews, including case studies, conducted by international organizations, NGOs and academic institutions.

27. UNFPA is holding a forum to consider the operational and technical implementation of the Programme of Action at The Hague, Netherlands, in February 1999. The forum will examine the progress made and the constraints encountered during the first 4-5 years of the ongoing implementation of the 20-year ICPD Programme of Action. The review process has come up with lessons learned and constraints encountered in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action in the mandated areas of UNFPA interventions. This information will help the Fund to strengthen its programmes in the future.

Policy formulation

28. The main constraints faced in the implementation of the Programme of Action have been the limited financial and human resources that are available. This is reinforced by the competing priorities for those same scarce resources. For example, competing priorities have impeded some governments from integrating population with development strategies as envisioned by the Programme of Action. In some developing countries and countries with economies in transition, population issues continue to be seen as independent of, or secondary to, economic growth or poverty alleviation. Research shows that 98 per cent of funds allocated for development are spent on sectors other than population. Population issues at the core of the ICPD vision -- especially the empowerment of women, schooling of girls, and integration of population into development -- have sometimes been overshadowed by what appear to be more immediately pressing economic or environmental concerns. There is, therefore, more need for awareness creation and advocacy activities on the links between population and other development issues.

29. A significant number of countries have cited the limited institutional infrastructure or lack of politically empowered sectoral bodies capable of addressing integrated population and development issues as constraints. Many countries in Africa and Asia have reported that a lack of coordination between ministries or institutions has made incorporating the policy aspects of the Cairo agenda into their Governments' overall strategies for development extremely challenging.

30. Many developing countries and countries with economies in transition reported that implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action was constrained by lack of systematic mechanisms for monitoring ICPD goals, the difficulties in obtaining disaggregated reproductive health and basic social indicators, and/or inadequate or insufficient data and analytical systems. For example, many of the economies in transition, especially the newly independent states, lack census data and have only a limited capacity to undertake a census.

31. Another significant constraint appears to be that there is still an inadequate level of knowledge and understanding of the concepts of reproductive rights and health as described in the ICPD Programme of Action, partly because it has been insufficiently disseminated. Even if there has been an understanding of the aims of the ICPD, getting political commitment to institute policies reflecting a human-rights approach has sometimes been difficult.

32. Reproductive health policy also appears to continue to be shaped primarily by health-sector organizations and professionals to the exclusion of other sectors and disciplines. The result has been inadequate attention to the social, economic and political dimensions of sexual health and reproductive rights while little attention has been given to the psycho-social, gender and emotional aspects of individual health and well-being. Political unrest and frequent turnover of civil servants have also been factors in various countries, and these have hindered the continuity of policy development, implementation and monitoring.

Programme redesign

Provision of universal access to reproductive health services, including family planning and sexual health; reduction in infant, child and maternal mortality.

33. Progress in implementing comprehensive, integrated services has been limited. Continuing non-integration of primary health-care services places an exceptional burden on women in meeting their diverse needs and those of their children. It also leads to duplication of infrastructural, management, information and other systems. Issues related to sexuality, critical to sexual and reproductive health, have often been absent or diluted in the services that do exist. Economic conditions and poor health-care infrastructure in many countries continue to obstruct access to services. Barriers to services include distance, lack of information on the availability and cost of services and the poor attitude of

providers. The shortage of appropriately trained staff has been an obstacle to developing and implementing training programmes.

34. Ensuring adolescent sexual and reproductive health and improving the life opportunities for both boys and girls equally will require much greater investments. As yet, few Governments have developed comprehensive strategies for investing in adolescent reproductive health. Also, overall progress in the area of male involvement has been limited. Likewise, until recently, reproductive health was not considered a priority in the provision of health services in emergency situations. However, the ICPD Programme of Action recognizes the need to ensure reproductive health care and rights in such situations. To help in making reproductive health services more available in emergency situations, in 1995 the Fund helped develop a minimum initial service package (MISP), consisting of essential drugs, supplies and basic surgical equipment. However, the availability of emergency health personel skilled in reproductive health information and services remains limited.

35. Greater awareness of the risks of maternal mortality and morbidity exists than ever before due to the momentum created by the Safe Motherhood Initiative (SMI). Interventions in maternal health are among the most cost-effective in the health care sector. A key challenge, however, remains: the alteration of existing health facilities, logistic systems and training to ensure appropriate and effective partum and post-partum care. Another constraint to overcome is the social barriers to access to such services. In order to provide adequate reproductive health to all by 2015, as envisioned in the Programme of Action, greatly increased training and support for service providers is necessary, and they continue to be insufficient, especially in such activities as the provision of information and communication and of counselling.

36. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and, especially, HIV/AIDS are enormous challenges to human development. The technology for HIV/AIDS prevention and control is still inadequate. A vaccine is not yet available. However, one important accomplishment in recent years has been the development of the female condom, the only female-controlled barrier method that can protect against HIV transmission.

Empowerment of women both as a highly important end in itself and as a key for improving the quality of life for everyone, and the provision of universal access to education, especially for girls.

37. The main constraint in attaining the gender goals of the Programme of Action has been the difficulty associated with operationalizing concepts related to gender equality, equity and empowerment of women in various social, cultural and political contexts. The integration of these concerns in a number of planning and programming processes has been slowed because of the absence of a consensus on what they mean. This problem is closely linked, in many countries, to the absence of research that would help in establishing clear operational definitions of the concepts

involved. Most available data are based on quantitative methodologies and statistical analyses of only a few variables. Even in those countries where conceptual issues have been resolved, action plans have not always been accompanied by the necessary resource allocations, constraining the extent to which such plans can be effectively implemented.

38. The persistence of traditional religious and cultural attitudes and practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), impacts negatively on the reproductive and sexual health of women and girls. Nor have all advances in technology been beneficial. For example, the information gap between gender remains stark, and the distribution of new information and communication technologies has been even less equal. Efforts to improve the education of the girl child is constrained at two levels: at the macro level, there is an overall scarcity of resources for the educational sector. This has been compounded by an often weak political will to invest in the education of the girl child. At the micro level, cultural attitudes still result in greater family investment in the education of boys as opposed to girls.

39. Another little-noticed constraint is that the increasing privatization of many social services in different countries of the world has often had greater impact on women than on men. With regard to health, the declining role of the state is introducing inequities in access to health because of the increased cost of private-sector health provision. This means that it is the poor, a large proportion of whom are women, who are shut off from access to health services. They also continue to shoulder more of the health burden accruing to families who can no longer afford hospitals, forcing the ill to be looked after at home, often by women.

40. Another factor with gender implications is the globalization of the world economy, which has sometimes led to the incorporation of women into industrial work characterized by lower wages, poor working conditions, and absence of workers' rights, including collective bargaining and maternity leave.

Increased partnership and collaboration

41. Almost five years after Cairo, changing development paradigms are continuing to shift the roles of government, civil society and the international community. Partnership has emerged as a basic element to support and advance the Programme of Action implementation process. It is clear that Governments alone cannot manage to provide the services needed to meet the basic human and social needs and aspirations of their citizens. NGOs were genuine partners in framing the Programme of Action agreements and are now partners in its implementation. Effective and empowered women's movements and other mass movements are proving to be effective in ensuring progress in policy development and implementation in many parts of the world.

42. There are several illustrations of growing partnership among the members of the United Nations system, Governments and NGOs.

(a) United Nations agencies have been working closely in tracking progress in reducing child and maternal mortality; UNFPA has collaborated closely with WHO and UNICEF in finalizing the Guidelines for Monitoring the Availability and Use of Obstetric Services issued by UNICEF;

(b) UNFPA, WHO and some other United Nations partners have worked closely in developing a core set of reproductive health indicators and methodologies for generating and analysing reproductive health information;

(c) WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA, recent partners in the Coordinating Committee on Health (CCH), are working on various initiatives together in the area of reproductive health;

(d) WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, the World Bank and two NGOs -- the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and The Population Council -- have co-sponsored the Safe Motherhood Initiative focusing on five key areas of action: advocacy; epidemiological, social and operational research; information dissemination; human resource development; and health service improvement measures in numerous countries;

(e) In the area of adolescent reproductive health, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO have developed a common agenda for action and support through the WHO Adolescents' Health and Development (AHD) programme, which seeks to use and expand the available knowledge base to achieve effective and sustainable programmes;

(f) UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO are taking concerted action to support policies and programmes to bring an end to the practice of FGM; a UNFPA-supported consultation in Ethiopia in 1995 helped set further strategies for combating the practice, while a UNFPA- funded project in Uganda resulted in a 39 per cent drop in FGM in less than one year;

(g) UNFPA is a partner along with UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank in UNAIDS, which is strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system to work with Governments to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic;

(h) In order to strengthen partnerships in providing reproductive health care in emergency situations, UNFPA has signed agreements with a number of organizations active in the emergency field, including UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration; and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Such collaboration has been

instrumental in developing strategies and programmes to provide reproductive health information and services for women, men, youth and adolescents and to combat sexual violence;

(i) The Basic Social Services for All Task Force has provided coordinated support to the Resident Coordinator system in assisting developing countries in implementing policies and programmes for achieving the goals of international conferences of the 1990s by, for example, developing guidelines and indicators; producing a wall chart outlining guidelines on key areas of the Programme of Action; preparing a report on lessons learned and best practices, an advocacy card and a compendium on international commitments relevant to eradicating poverty; and promoting social integration.

Increased resource allocation

43. If the ICPD goals are to be achieved, efforts to meet the funding levels specified in the Programme of Action will have to be intensified. Many countries have made impressive strides in realigning domestic budgets to address the ICPD goals of improving the accessibility and quality of reproductive health programmes, reducing mortality and increasing attention to related social sectors. However, financial crises are affecting the ability of many countries, especially developing countries and countries in transition, to maintain their initial momentum.

C. Social Summit follow-up

44. UNFPA participated actively in the Hanoi meeting on the 20/20 Initiative and took part in its consensus agreement. Future steps that were identified in Hanoi related mostly to process issues, establishing partnerships between stakeholders, assembling data on public expenditure and the flows of ODA, assessing the impact of economic turmoil, promoting debt exchange for investment in basic social services and institutionalizing the follow-ups to the initiative within the United Nations legislative and review machinery.

45. The meeting underlined that the goal of universal access to basic social services was based on ethical, legal and economic grounds. The meeting reiterated the need for greater investment in basic social services. The Hanoi meeting was particularly concerned with the debt and economic crises. UNFPA's contribution to the work of the ACC on Basic Social Services for All was stressed at the meeting. UNFPA will follow the issue closely in the context of the follow-up to the Social Summit.

D. Human rights

46. UNFPA participated fully in the human rights activities that took place in 1998 in connection with the five-year anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA+5). In

particular, the Fund continued its support for the rights-based approach of the review process which specifically mentioned that "the rights-based approach recognizes that every woman has the right to access to reproductive health services". UNFPA participates in the sub-group on human rights of the UNDG. This group is focusing attention, inter alia, on the implementation of the right to development. The Fund works closely with the Human Rights Treaty Bodies, particularly the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). As a follow-up to the Vienna, Beijing and Cairo conferences, UNFPA is continuing to work with treaty bodies on reproductive and sexual rights. As the Chair of the Basic Social Services for All Task Force, UNFPA ensured that the work of the group took place within a human-rights framework and that the linkage between human rights and access to basic social services was emphasized.

47. The Fund continues to implement the VDPA in its policies and programmes. In its programming, UNFPA seeks to enhance national capacities to promote and protect human rights by supporting the work of Governments and civil society groups, particularly NGOs. In several countries, UNFPA is providing assistance to strengthen legal systems to ensure the promotion and enforcement of statutes to protect human rights. In a number of countries, the Fund is supporting activities to educate sometimes disenfranchised groups about their reproductive rights as well as the civil and political rights to which they are entitled. UNFPA supports a wide range of activities addressing the elimination of gender-based violence. It has provided assistance to train judiciary and law enforcement personnel on how to deal with gender-based violence. UNFPA has sponsored advocacy efforts in a number of countries to eliminate FGM and other harmful traditional practices against women. Together with WHO and UNICEF, UNFPA has issued a joint statement on elimination of FGM and co-sponsored a workshop on FGM with the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 1998.

48. UNFPA carries out its programming in the area of population and development in the context of the right to development and, within its mandate, the eradication of poverty. UNFPA has recently concluded a study on the effects of the financial and economic crisis on population and reproductive health in four Asian countries; the study pays particular attention to the impact of the crisis on the situation of women.

49. The course of the ICPD+5 review has highlighted many aspects in which human rights issues impinge on the implementation of the Programme of Action, e.g., the capacity of civil society to respond to human rights concerns and the delivery of reproductive health services in emergency situations as a means of protecting the human rights of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. Constraints on ensuring the human rights of these populations include social factors that militate against recognizing the rights of vulnerable populations, especially women.

E. Bretton Woods Institutions

50. In his reform report, the Secretary-General has called for "an appropriate distribution of responsibilities between the World Bank Group and the United Nations for the benefit of programme countries. This should take the form of a functional rationalization in a complementary and cooperative manner between the work of the United Nations and the World Bank." The United Nations and the World Bank are currently focusing their cooperation efforts in three areas -- knowledge networks, capacity building and technical assistance, and the interface between the UNDAF and the Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) exercises. UNFPA is committed to strengthening cooperation with the Bretton Woods Institutions, and this is high on the agenda of the Fund.

51. UNFPA and the Bretton Woods Institutions enjoy a strong collaborative relationship. During the past year, there has been increasing collaboration between UNFPA and the World Bank, both at the headquarters and field levels. For example, when UNFPA Country Representatives come to headquarters, provision is made for them to visit the World Bank to discuss programme issues at the country level. In the field, UNFPA Representatives are to actively pursue closer consultation and collaboration with the World Bank.

52. Consultation between UNFPA's geographic divisions and their regional counterparts in the World Bank takes place on a regular basis. For example, in November 1998, the Africa Division of UNFPA and the Africa Region of the World Bank held a consultation at World Bank headquarters to share information on recent or upcoming activities and to identify countries for concrete, collaborative UNFPA-World Bank activities. The participants selected Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Uganda as priority countries for concerted collaboration between the two organizations. They also identified three priority issues for collaboration: maternal mortality reduction, adolescent reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS. The two groups agreed to strengthen collaboration in these areas by improving the use of communications technologies; enhancing and sharing databases, including indicators; collaborating on financing censuses; sharing knowledge on thematic issues; carrying out extended missions to share technical capacity; maintaining contact between the Bank and the UNFPA country support teams; harmonizing, to the extent possible, World Bank Country Assessment Strategies and UNFPA Country Population Assessments; increasing technical discussions, including on procurement, at the headquarters level; exploring field-level collaboration, in such areas as financing the development of health infrastructure; and concentrating on capacity building, sustainability and health-sector reform.

53. In terms of common initiatives, UNFPA and the World Bank work closely together in a number of activities (e.g., Global Initiative on Contraceptive Requirements and Logistics Management; Partners in Population and Development). The World Bank has invited UNFPA to be a co-sponsor

of the World Bank Training Program on Population and Operationalizing Reproductive Health. To date, modules have been held in Bangladesh and Kenya and additional ones are planned during 1999. UNFPA has supported a number of developing country participants to attend these training sessions. Moreover, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund actively participated in the BSSA Task Force and both are actively involved in the ICPD+5 review process.

54. UNFPA actively participates in the World Bank Human Development Week (HD Week). This event provides a forum for Bank staff, both field and headquarters, as well as for representatives of various organizations active in the area of population and development, to come together to share experiences and common learning about work in social sector. This year's HD Week offers a module on Health, Nutrition and Population, which examines, among other things, health promotion; equity and health-sector reform; adolescent health; and poverty, equity and health.

55. In January 1999, the Fund participated in a regional meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, on Social Issues arising from the East Asia Crisis. The meeting, organized by the World Bank, was attended by more than 200 senior-level delegates. The aims of the meeting were: (a) to try to get a deeper understanding of the social impact of the crisis; (b) to identify new initiatives to advance social development; and (c) to consider issues related to operational coordination and partnerships. UNFPA participated in the plenary discussion as well as in the Working Group on Maintaining Basic Social Services. The Working Group addressed such issues as contents of basic social services; the impact of crises on social services and the nature of response; the effective targeting of interventions; maintaining and improving the funding of social services; and the importance of effective partnerships in designing and implementing social services.

III. FOLLOW-UP TO SPECIAL ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE: AGREED CONCLUSIONS

56. The mandate of UNFPA is to provide support to ensure that women, men, couples and young people have access to and receive quality reproductive health care. Since 1994, UNFPA has been increasingly responding to the reproductive health needs of populations in conflict and other crisis situations, including refugees and internally displaced persons, and has sought to focus international attention on the issue of reproductive health and rights in emergency situations. At the first inter-agency symposium on reproductive health in refugee situations, organized by UNFPA together with UNHCR and in collaboration with UNICEF and WHO in June 1995, more than 50 humanitarian agencies including members of the United Nations system and NGOs attended. It resulted in two important developments -- the creation of the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on reproductive health in refugee situations and production of "An Inter-Agency Manual on Reproductive Health in Refugee Situations". The dissemination of the latter has helped UNFPA country offices strengthen the implementation of reproductive health activities in emergency situations. Indeed, the Fund has

supported such projects in over 20 countries in conflict or post-conflict situations. The symposium also defined the minimum initial services package (MISP) for delivering health services in emergencies.

57. UNFPA's frontline experience is relatively recent, and the Fund continues its tradition of close inter-agency collaboration with all United Nations partners both in the field as well as in headquarters in the context of the Secretary-General's reform proposals in the UNDG. UNFPA works with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and collaborates closely with the activities of both OCHA and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. In the field, for example in Eritrea, UNFPA has served on the OCHA-led needs assessment team and provided the population framework for developing a multisectoral United Nations inter-agency humanitarian appeal. In several other cases, UNFPA has provided emergency reproductive health kits, other reproductive health supplies and training to serve displaced populations in border conflict areas as well as for refugees. UNFPA has also been supporting the broader United Nations inter-agency humanitarian assistance efforts through provision of expertise in documenting the demographic aspects of such crises. In this regard, the Fund has provided technical and financial support for the collection and analysis of socio-economic data on incoming refugees and forced migrants, particularly women. The recent agreements with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in June 1995, the International Organization for Migration in December 1996 and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in July 1998 have served to formalize the ongoing collaboration in the field.

58. Constraints to the effectiveness and timeliness of UNFPA's interventions in emergency situations are both programmatic and financial/administrative. The procedures established for the development, approval and adoption of regular country programmes and their concomitant projects, the financial mechanisms for budget revisions, normal procurement procedures, and the monitoring and evaluation systems set in place for regular programmes are not conducive to the flexibility and rapid-response reactions required in emergency situations. The Fund is working to see how current systems can be adopted to make rapid response more feasible.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

59. The Executive Board may wish to take note of the present report and transmit it, with its comments, to the Economic and Social Council.

III. EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND ON ITS SECOND REGULAR SESSION, HELD FROM 12 TO 16 APRIL 1999

UNDP report

1. The Administrator introduced his report to the Economic and Social Council (DP/1999/10). He noted that the report had been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolutions 53/192, 50/120, and 47/199, as well as Economic and Social Council resolutions 1994/33 and 1998/27. UNDP had taken special care in preparing the report to address the new standards and requirements that the Executive Board had set in 1998, in particular those calling for a more analytical report indicating lessons learned and problems. In addition, the report included recommendations for action by the Economic and Social Council. An approach and format that was common to UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund, and the World Food Programme, had been utilized, while allowing for each fund to highlight aspects that were particularly relevant to its areas of operation.

2. The Administrator reviewed the highlights of the report and then made brief remarks relating to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the World Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF).

3. With regard to UNDAF, the challenge would be twofold, he explained, to ensure a strategic and holistic framework. UNDAF was designed to bring greater coherence, collaboration, and effectiveness to the United Nations development efforts at the country level. The synthesis of agreements reached at the United Nations summits and conferences in the 1990s had laid the basis for a strong, legitimate vision of support to programme countries through UNDAF. All United Nations organizations had important roles to play in a team effort. A periodic update on the progress in pursuing United Nations reform proposals, prepared by the United Nations Development Group Office, was made available to the Executive Board.

4. The Administrator noted that with regard to the CDF, the approach based on country ownership should be distinguished from models that sought to weld the international community together into one unified monolithic force, which was not a healthy prospect; CDF should not be such an instrument. Experience had shown that the United Nations development effort, in its independent thinking, non-conditionality and country ownership, was very valuable. Development cooperation agencies should offer options to programme countries, and those countries could have legitimate concerns regarding the emergence of a tight coalition of all external partners.

5. The Administrator underlined that the purpose of the CDF should not be confused with that of UNDAF. The CDF should not be seen as superseding UNDAF, as the latter was designed to bring greater coherence, collaboration, and effectiveness to the United Nations development effort at the country level.

6. Work on the common country assessments (CCAs) and UNDAFs would continue as planned. The CCA/UNDAF process, which had been endorsed by the General

Assembly, was designed to strengthen both the strategic value and coherence of United Nations development cooperation. The process should provide a solid foundation for United Nations country teams to engage in a dialogue with national partners and the World Bank on the CDF. Likewise, Governments could continue to encourage the World Bank to contribute to, and participate in, the CCA/UNDAF guidelines to be issued shortly. Finally, it was for Member States to decide what programming tools they wished to utilize and the role that they wanted the international community to play.

7. The Administrator briefed the Executive Board on the outcome of the first session of 1999 of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), which had included the approval of a guidance note prepared in the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) on the CCA/UNDAF process. The guidance note encouraged the enhanced involvement of specialized agencies in the process, including through their governing bodies.

Discussion

8. Many delegations took the floor to congratulate UNDP on its report, which they described as analytical, problem-oriented and very useful, in particular through its recommendations, to the discussions at the Economic and Social Council. The report fulfilled the provisions of General Assembly, Economic and Social Council and Executive Board legislation, and could serve as a model for reporting to the Council by funds and programmes. The recommendations could be the subject of an informal discussion at the Council.

9. United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Many speakers addressed the role of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and UNDAF in furthering United Nations reform in the operational activities area, expressing strong support for the CCA/UNDAF process. One delegation emphasized that UNDG was an internal secretariat body with a limited substantive role. Continued collaboration at the inter-agency level was strongly emphasized, with speakers underlining the need for specialized agencies to participate in the UNDAF process. The recent decision by ACC in that regard was welcomed. The need for UNDAF to meet the needs of programme countries and reflect their priorities was emphasized by many delegations, as was the need to ensure that UNDAF developed into a strategic document. With regard to the recommendations on UNDAF contained in paragraph 33 (b), several speakers questioned the wording regarding coordination, stating that it should refer to coordination "with" other donors, and not "of" other donors. One delegation expressed concern about that formulation, which could lead to confusion with CDF. It noted that UNDAF, unlike the CDF project of the World Bank, was an internal United Nations exercise, the purpose of which was to enable the various United Nations bodies to offer a rational, coherent and ordered response to the needs expressed by the programme countries. The purpose of CDF was far more ambitious, since it related to the entire bilateral and multilateral donor community. One delegation underlined that questions relating to monitoring and evaluation, as mentioned in paragraph 25 of document DP/1999/10, did not arise since UNDAF was a framework and not an operational programme. Some speakers expressed the hope that UNDG would coordinate increasingly with the other sectoral reform groups created by the Secretary-General. Other delegations underlined the need to involve civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in the UNDAF

process. More information on the outcome of the evaluation of the pilot UNDAFs would be welcomed.

10. Resident coordinator system. Several speakers praised the progress made in strengthening the resident coordinator system, in particular with regard to the competency-based selection process, integrated training and increased inter-agency participation. There was general support for the recommendations contained in document DP/1999/10 on the resident coordinator system.

11. Funding. Speakers underlined the progress seen in designing a funding strategy for the organization, one that would ensure greater predictability and linkage between resources and results. Many delegations emphasized the great importance attached to meeting the funding targets set for contributions to the core. Support was expressed for the text contained in paragraph 8 of document DP/1999/10.

12. Comprehensive Development Framework. Many speakers commented on the implications of the CDF for the United Nations. Some expressed concern about how the CDF would affect the success of UNDAF, as well as how the CDF could impact on the objective of UNDAF to simplify procedures at the country level, both for Governments and country-based staffs of international organizations. In that regard, there was also recognition of the need for further strengthening of the capacity of programme countries to coordinate the implementation of the various instruments. The CDF was seen as distinct from UNDAF although there could be overlap in some areas. Many speakers stated that they would reserve their views on the CDF pending the outcome of discussions within the World Bank. There was support for further consultations between the United Nations and the World Bank in order to avoid duplication and ensure complementarity. Speakers underlined the need for real partnership between UNDP and the World Bank. However, the views of delegations differed with regard to the recommendation contained in paragraph 33 (d), in which collaboration was encouraged with the World Bank on the UNDAF process and the CDF. Further information was requested on how UNDAF and the CDF would relate to the country strategy note. Activities often required real partnership between UNDP and the World Bank. One delegation felt that the recommendation was premature because the CDF was not at the implementation phase, but at the phase of definition and experimentation. Moreover, there had been an initial exchange of views on the initiative in the Board of Governors of the World Bank, during which the Governors had requested a number of clarifications. It would therefore be best to wait for the discussion within the Board of Governors of the World Bank to be concluded before taking up the matter in the UNDP Executive Board or deciding on any participation by UNDP in its implementation.

13. The representative of the World Bank stated that cooperation between the World Bank and UNDP was positive on both the operational and institutional levels. A standing dialogue existed with UNDP on a variety of issues of mutual concern. The World Bank was currently engaged in a dialogue with the United Nations on the CDF. He noted that the rationale, design and implementation of the CDF and UNDAF were different. The World Bank did not wish to marginalize UNDAF but rather to strengthen it.

14. Regional cooperation. Many delegations emphasized the importance of UNDP support to regional cooperation, especially through the regional economic and

social commissions. Interregional cooperation, including technical cooperation among developing countries, was also important.

15. Common premises and services. Several delegations stated that common premises should be utilized only where effective, an element recognized in the triennial policy review. Several speakers requested information on the cost/benefit ratio of common premises and services. One delegation noted that options regarding common premises should be examined on a case-by-case basis. More information on the possibility of increasing common services was requested by some delegations.

16. Gender balance. Many speakers expressed support for the progress of UNDP towards achieving the gender-balance targets in the organization. One delegation raised a query about why mid-level professional women had been leaving the organization in disproportionate numbers during the downsizing process.

17. Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. Several references included in document DP/1999/10 on this subject were strongly supported by speakers, including that contained in paragraph 56 regarding concern about the lack of realization of funding expectations generated by the conferences, and that in paragraph 59 (a) concerning the need to call upon governing bodies of United Nations entities to consider devoting specific resources to horizontal follow-up. The role of UNDP in follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development was particularly important. One delegation questioned the reference in paragraph 59 linking follow-up to conferences with UNDAFs.

18. Follow-up to special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance. Delegations addressed the role of UNDAF as an instrument for creating a disaster-relief assistance framework, the importance of a comprehensive approach to humanitarian assistance with the involvement of all actors, and the creation of flexible mechanisms for crisis countries. One delegation requested that care be taken in the use of terminology that had not been accepted by intergovernmental consensus.

19. Format and design of report. While many speakers welcomed the common format of the reports of UNDP and UNFPA, some speakers suggested that one consolidated report would be more useful for discussion in the Economic and Social Council. Other delegations supported the continuation of producing two separate reports. In either case, the reporting should continue to focus on selected subjects and duplication between the two reports should be avoided as much as possible.

Response

20. The Administrator stated that it was important for the World Bank to clarify the role and intent of the CDF in relation to the concerns raised regarding the CCA/UNDAF process. He underlined the ambiguity surrounding the CDF in that there were currently many different views concerning its purpose and role. The consultation process between the United Nations and World Bank would help to clarify the issues. He noted that the CDF could create many demands on programme countries for which UNDP could provide technical cooperation. He

looked forward to the further strengthening of the partnership of UNDP with the World Bank.

21. The Administrator stated that he expected the country teams to work together to provide assurances that individual programmes were carried out in cohesion with UNDAF. He noted that the regional economic commissions had participated in the development of the guidelines on UNDAF and had a clear role in the process. Monitoring and evaluation of UNDAF would be limited to an assessment of overall objectives, building on lessons learned by individual agencies. It was not envisaged that non-United Nations system partners would be brought into the UNDAF process but collaboration with those actors in support of country priorities could be enhanced through other means. The results of the evaluation of the pilot UNDAFs would be made available.

22. In response to other comments made, the Administrator noted that mid-career women had left in unexpectedly larger numbers in the latest downsizing owing to factors such as decentralization and family issues. Nevertheless, UNDP was proud of the gender-balance goals it had achieved. With regard to training activities, including those for resident coordinators, he stated that they now included greater inter-agency participation. He informed the Executive Board that more information on the disaster-relief activities of UNDP would be made available at the Economic and Social Council session.

23. The Executive Board took note of the report to the Economic and Social Council (DP/1999/10) and decided to transmit them to the Economic and Social Council with the comments made thereon.

UNFPA report

24. In introducing the report of the Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council (DP/FPA/1999/5), the Executive Director underscored the full commitment of UNFPA to all United Nations coordination and collaboration mechanisms. She stated that the Fund was a very active partner in the many processes by which coordination was pursued, either within the context of the entire United Nations system - through the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) mechanisms, the Secretary-General's Executive Committees, and notably the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) - or via a number of other consultations and arrangements, such as the recent high-level consultations between WHO and UNFPA. She emphasized that the Fund actively cooperated with all United Nations partners and civil society in helping to implement, in a coherent, complementary and integrated manner, the agreements reached at the United Nations global conferences of the 1990s.

25. Noting that the Economic and Social Council session in 1998 was a landmark in many ways, she drew the attention of the Executive Board to a number of highlights: the special session on an integrated follow-up to the United Nations global conferences of the 1990s; the far-reaching discussions on the triennial comprehensive policy review at the annual session of the Council; the decision to schedule a special session in May 1999 on basic indicators; and the adoption by the Council of key themes for 1999 that reflected the priorities of Member States, including the role of employment and work in poverty eradication, the empowerment and advancement of women and the development of Africa.

26. The Executive Director pointed out that the report to the Council covered a wide range of issues, including the triennial comprehensive policy review and its follow-up; progress on the reform of the Secretary-General; follow-up activities to the United Nations conferences, including the ICPD+5 review and assessment; the many initiatives being pursued within UNDG, including the resident coordinator system; the question of resources for population programmes; and humanitarian/emergency operations. She drew attention to the section in the report focusing on the cooperation and collaboration among UNFPA and the Bretton Woods institutions and noted that the Fund had actively pursued consultations with the World Bank at both the headquarters and field levels. She observed that she had already discussed the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) under an earlier agenda item.

27. The Executive Director underscored that work was progressing well within the UNDG and the revised guidelines on the common country assessment (CCA) as well as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) were being issued. She pointed out that the CCA and the UNDAF processes provided a key opportunity to address absorptive capacity issues and to plan for national capacity-building. While noting the Fund's committed and active involvement in the UNDAF process, at both the headquarters and field levels, and its willingness to deploy the resources required to help to achieve results, the Executive Director observed that the exercise was demanding and time-consuming and UNFPA staff resources were about one quarter the size of its sister organizations. She concluded by paying tribute to the Administrator of UNDP for his commitment to United Nations reform and his leadership in chairing UNDG.

28. During the ensuing discussion, delegations focused mainly on the following issues: the quality of the report; the commitment to United Nations reform, including involvement in UNDAF and UNDG; the Fund's partnerships with other development partners; and the need to reduce the reporting burden on programme countries.

29. Several delegations commented favourably on the quality of the report and commended it for being analytical, concise and informative. Some delegations observed that the report should be more analytical and recommended that the model of the UNDP report should be followed, with a focus on providing lessons learned and recommendations. A number of delegations were pleased to note the common format of the UNFPA and UNDP reports and stated that it facilitated the discussion. While some delegations favoured having separate reports from UNFPA and UNDP, noting that that arrangement allowed the two organizations to express their particular points of view, other delegations supported the idea of a joint report to the Council and pointed out that a consolidated report would avoid repetition.

30. Several delegations commended the Fund's strong commitment to United Nations reform and the renewed emphasis given to it in the report and also commended the Fund's involvement in the UNDAF process. They noted that good progress was being made on United Nations reform within UNDG, notably in the area of UNDAF, and were pleased with the active and supportive role UNFPA had been carrying out in that regard. One delegation proposed submitting country programmes to the United Nations country team for analysis to ensure that the country programmes were coherent and in line with the UNDAF guidelines. Another

delegation strongly supported the use of UNDAF as the long-term development instrument in post-emergency situations.

31. A number of delegations expressed views on the complementarity and/or overlap of the UNDAF and the CDF (see paras. 9 and 12-13 for that discussion).

32. One delegation, while recognizing the Fund's key role in designing programmes that assist countries in meeting the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), stated that UNFPA also had an important role to play in the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. The delegation added that the report should have highlighted results in the area of gender.

33. Several delegations underscored the importance of the Fund's partnerships with other United Nations entities and civil society organizations. While commending the Fund's collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other development partners, some delegations stated that collaboration with the United Nations regional commissions should be enhanced. Another delegation stated that the Fund should use the regional commissions to assist in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action and noted that the commissions could serve as substantive partners, contributing their technical expertise and knowledge of the region to operational activities. One delegation stated that the Executive Board should recommend more in-depth collaboration with the regional commissions. Another delegation noted that specific mention should have been made in the report of the Fund's collaboration and cooperation with the Commission on Population and Development, including in the ICPD+5 process. One delegation highlighted the importance of working with civil society, including grass-roots organizations, in programme implementation, and noted that such collaboration resulted in reduced costs, better follow-up and strengthened grass-roots communities. The delegation added that both his country and UNFPA had reaped benefits from such collaboration.

34. A number of delegations shared the Fund's concern, expressed in the report, that the reporting burden on programme countries should be reduced and reporting requirements should be simplified. One delegation, while noting that UNDG and UNDAF should not create undue burden on field offices, cautioned that coordination should not distract agencies from their original mandates.

35. One delegation, referring to paragraph 8 of the report, stated that it did not consider the establishment of data bases to be vital to the monitoring of conference goals. The delegation pointed out that the role that the Fund had been correctly playing went far beyond a restricted monitoring approach and focused on providing financial and technical resources to programme countries to assist them in achieving conference goals. The delegation agreed that the main constraint faced in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action and the Beijing Platform for Action was the lack of financial and human resources. The delegation added that it fully shared the conclusions expressed in paragraphs 39 and 40 regarding the gender implications and disproportionate impact on women of the privatization of social services and the globalization of the world economy.

36. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for their frank and constructive comments and questions. She acknowledged that the UNDP report was better than the Fund's report and assured the Board that for the following year UNFPA would produce a more analytical report with lessons learned included. She added that a joint report from UNDG would also be presented to the Council. She fully agreed with the observation that the Beijing Platform for Action was important for the work of the Fund, particularly as it included key areas and issues advanced by the ICPD Programme of Action She noted that she would continue to consult with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women concerning the Beijing follow-up process. Also, regarding the general process of conference follow-up, the Executive Director proposed a much stronger utilization of the horizontal follow-up mechanisms, including, inter alia, the effective use and promotion of the outputs of the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All.

37. She welcomed the suggestion that the country programmes should be reviewed by the country team and underscored that UNFPA had long been a proponent of such an approach, particularly as it helped to identify needs, gaps and overlaps while also providing opportunities to contribute to common goals. She added that the Fund also emphasized the fundamental importance of consultations with Governments, other development partners and stakeholders, including NGOs and other members of civil society. She affirmed that the Fund's country programme process was based on national ownership and leadership and reflected national priorities. She noted that the Fund had a very focused mandate and hoped that the UNDAF process would be one vehicle for development partners to give active support to ICPD goals. She agreed with the delegation that had underscored the importance of and the benefits deriving from working with grass-roots organizations and community groups and also agreed that it should be reflected in the report. She assured the Executive Board that the Fund had a very good collaborative relationship with the regional commissions and she concurred with the view that the role of the commissions in conference follow-up could be enhanced. She added that the Deputy Secretary-General was holding consultations on that and related matters.

38. The Executive Director underscored that multilateral grant assistance should be channelled through the United Nations system. Emphasizing the need to rationalize and streamline various coordination processes, she wondered if it was necessary to come up with yet another new process. She did not agree with the distinction drawn by the representative of the World Bank that the CDF was a development tool and the UNDAF was a planning tool. She stressed that UNDAF was definitely a development tool and that promoting development and building national capacity in programme countries was the raison d'être of the United Nations operational activities. On the relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, in particular the World Bank, the Executive Director underscored the fundamental importance of Member States giving consistent instructions to their representatives at the United Nations and at the World Bank and concurred with the delegations who had expressed that view.

39. She agreed with the delegations that had underlined the need to reduce the reporting burden on programme countries. She noted that during her recent visit to Viet Nam, she had learned how an overwhelming reporting burden had been rationalized and streamlined through the work of a theme group on reproductive

health, chaired by UNFPA, so that instead of providing separate reports on over 50 donor-supported projects, it would now be possible to report on the basis of a few selected indicators. Most importantly, the effort had enabled the Government to utilize the new reporting mechanisms for its own management of the programme.